Pamph
Anthrop
Folk-lore
H

With the author's compliments

TWO ESSAYS IN FOLK-LORE.

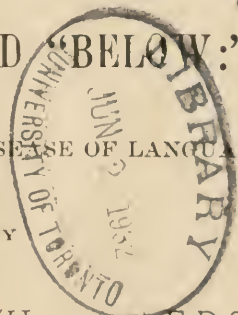
THE FALL OF HOCHELAGA:

A STUDY OF POPULAR TRADITION;

AND

"ABOVE" AND "BELOW:"

A MYTHOLOGICAL DISEASE OF LANGUAGE.



BY

HORATIO HALE, M.A. (HARVARD), F.R.S. CANADA,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLK-LORE,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
1890-1894.

THE JOURNAL OF

AMERICAN FOLK-LORE.

Vol. VII.—JANUARY-MARCH, 1894.—No. XXIV.

THE FALL OF HOCHELAGA:

A STUDY OF POPULAR TRADITION.

When, in the early autumn of 1535, the intrepid explorer, Jacques Cartier, with his little flotilla, recalling in number and dimensions the caravels of Columbus, made his doubtful and hazardous way up the great stream which his native guides knew as the River of Hochelaga, but which he renamed the St. Lawrence, he found the lands through which he passed occupied by tribes belonging to two distinct ethnic groups. These have been commonly known as the Algonkin (or Algonquin) and the Huron-Iroquois families. The latest scientific nomenclature makes them the Algonquian and Iroquoian stocks. But, for the purpose of the present paper, it seems advisable to retain the older designations.

From his guides, who were two Indians of the Huron-Iroquois race, that had accompanied him to France from an earlier voyage to the St. Lawrence Gulf, he learned that the regions along the river, on both sides, from its mouth as far inland apparently as their knowledge extended, belonged, according to the native notions, to three separate provinces or "lands" (*terres*). Nearest the gulf was the land of Saguenay, deriving its name from the great tributary stream which unites with the St. Lawrence about a hundred miles below Quebec. This territory was occupied, then as subsequently, by scattered bands of the Algonkin stock. Next came the province of "Canada" proper, that is to say, the land of the "Town," for such is the well-known meaning of *Canada* in the Iroquoian language and all the allied idioms. This town was Stadaconé, a native village which stood near the site of what is now Quebec. It was the capital or chief abode of Donnacona, the Great Lord (*Agouhana*) of the province. He himself, as his title indicates, was of the Huron-Iroquois stock, though his people seem to have been in part of the Algonkin family. But he and they were alike subject to a much

mightier ruler, the great King and Lord (*Roy et Seigneur*) of HOCHELAGA.

This densely peopled and strongly fortified town, which occupied the site of what is now Montreal, was visited by Cartier, who has left us a vivid description of the place and its inhabitants. The path by which he approached it from the river led through a beautiful plain, shaded at first by a forest of stately oaks, to which succeeded large and well-cultivated fields of maize. In the midst of these plains, rising near the foot of a lofty eminence which Cartier named the "Royal Mount" (*Mont Royal*, now abridged to Montreal), the civic fortress presented the towering and formidable front which caused the early settlers of northern New York to give to the similar strongholds of their Iroquoian neighbors the name of "castles." The inclosing wall was composed of a triple row of tree-trunks, shaped and planted as palisades, and rising to the height of two lances' length. The middle row was upright; the inner and outer rows, inclining to this, were crossed at the top, and braced by horizontal beams, thus forming galleries, whence missiles could be showered upon an assailing force. Within the inclosure were fifty spacious houses, or rather barracks, some of them fifty yards long by fifteen in width, framed of wood, and covered with sheets of bark. Each house, divided into compartments, was the abode of several families; and the whole population probably comprised between two and three thousand persons. But this number did not really indicate the defensive force which its ruler had at his command. The occupants of the fortress were merely a local garrison, which in case of need could soon be largely recruited from the neighboring country. For Hochelaga, as we learn from Cartier, was the capital of a considerable empire, embracing, besides the "Canadians" of Stadaconé, "eight or nine other peoples along the great river."

In 1543, France, disturbed by civil commotions, withdrew from North America, and all efforts at exploration were intermitted. For nearly sixty years the names of those strange northern chiefdoms which Cartier had disclosed to the world remained unmentioned. It was not until 1598 that the Marquis de la Roche, a nobleman of Brittany, at length obtained from Henry IV. authority to resume the colonization of New France, and received with this authority the grandiloquent title of "Lieutenant-General of Canada, *Hochelaga*, Newfoundland, Labrador, and the countries adjacent." But five years later, when Champlain, who was to be the actual founder, made his way up the St. Lawrence to the seat of his future colony, he found, to his surprise, that Hochelaga, along with Stadaconé and its other subject towns, had disappeared entirely, leaving no trace of their existence. A few wandering Algonkins occupied, but

hardly pretended to possess, the country which had been the seat of this lost empire. They and their Huron allies from the Georgian Bay lived in a state of constant warfare with the confederate Iroquoian nations, who held nearly the whole southern shore of the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario, and kept the tribes along the northern coast of that river and lake in perpetual alarm. It is natural to inquire what had become of the great Hochelagan dominion, which had so strangely vanished, and had been replaced, as it seemed, by a still more formidable power on the southern side of the dividing waters.

This is a question with which many historians, from Charlevoix to Parkman, have dealt, but to which no decisive answer has thus far been returned. It is evidently a question of no small importance, historical as well as ethnological ; for it concerns the leading cause of the failure or success of French and British colonization in America. If, after the lapse of more than three centuries, we can succeed in answering it, there may be good hope of solving hereafter some other still more interesting and perplexing problems, such, for example, as the origin and fate of the Mound-builders and Cliff-dwellers, and the source and development of Mexican and Mayan civilization.

In the present case the problem, it must be admitted, is comparatively simple. Unless we make the very unlikely supposition that not only were Hochelaga and its subject towns totally destroyed, but their populations were completely exterminated, there are only two directions in which we can reasonably look for the offspring of these populations. The survivors either withdrew to the south side of their great river, and there united with, or, as some suppose, actually became, the Iroquois nations, or else they retired to the west and there joined, or, as some think, wholly composed, the Huron tribes whom Champlain found near the Georgian Bay. The question is thus narrowed down to two points : firstly, to which of these ancient divisions of the Huron-Iroquois family are the Hochelagan people to be traced ; and secondly, by what hostile power was the overthrow of their state accomplished ?

It might seem that the evidence of language alone should be sufficient to settle the first of these points. We have two vocabularies left us by Cartier, containing many of the common words by which the affiliations of language are determined. But unfortunately all that they enable us to prove is that the people of Cartier's "Land and Kingdom of Hochelaga and Canada" spoke a dialect of the Huron-Iroquois stock. Every attempt to find a specially close connection between this dialect and that of any other known branch of the stock has thus far proved a failure. The imperfections of Car-

tier's orthography and the changes of time are quite sufficient to account for this result.

In the absence of other evidence, we have to fall back upon that of tradition. It is only of late years, and especially since folk-lore has become a science, and is studied as such in connection with its sister science of comparative philology, that the value of this evidence has been fully understood. In the present case it has been found decisive. Several years ago, while engaged in studying the languages and history of the Canadian tribes, I visited the Wyandots of Anderdon, on the Detroit River, the last feeble remnant of the only tribe which retained in Canada the speech of the once famous and powerful Huron people. This ill-fated people, crushed by the Iroquois in the desperate struggle of which Parkman, in his volume on "The Jesuits in North America," has given us a narrative of singular interest, fled at first to the far west, and took refuge for a time among their Algonkin friends, the Ojibways, on the shores and islands of Lakes Michigan and Superior. After a time, returning gradually eastward, they made their principal abode for a term on the island of Michilimackinac. Thence, at a later day, descending through Lakes Huron and St. Clair, they took possession of the fertile plains on both sides of the Detroit River, where the guns of Fort Pontchartrain and the presence of friendly Algonkin bands — Ojibways, Ottawas, and others — gave them hope of security against their persistent Iroquois enemies. The same distinguished historian, in his "Conspiracy of Pontiac," has described the remarkable predominance which the intellectual superiority of this people, even in their reduced condition, enabled them to maintain over the surrounding tribes.

Finally, about the middle of the present century, the majority of the Wyandots, on both sides of the Detroit River, decided to remove to the southwest, under the auspices of the American government. There in the Indian Territory, and, singularly enough, on a tract directly adjoining the abode of an emigrant band of their ancient enemies, the Senecas, they have found what they may well hope to be a final refuge. It is interesting to know, as an evidence of their strongly conservative character, that, after so many wanderings and vicissitudes, they retain their ancient civic polity with so much vigor that Major Powell has been enabled, in a "Study of Wyandot Government," to reveal fully this remarkable system, and to clear up many mysteries which the intelligent and well-educated Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries, living in the Huron towns nearly three centuries ago, did not fully comprehend.

A small number of the Wyandots, not exceeding seventy, but including a few persons of superior capacity, clung to their Canadian

homes, and remained on what was known as the Anderdon Reserve. From them, and especially from their chief, an elderly man of noble presence and marked intelligence, much information concerning the history, customs, and beliefs of the people and their ancestors was obtained. The chief bore in English the name of Joseph White, and in his own language the somewhat singular appellation of Mandorong, or "Unwilling." The name, which he owed to the fancy of his parents, did not by any means indicate his disposition, which was peculiarly frank and genial. He assured me that the traditions of his people represented them as having dwelt originally in the east, near Quebec. He had once journeyed as far as that city, and had then visited the remnant of the Hurons at Lorette. These had ceased to make use of their ancient language in their ordinary speech, but they had not entirely forgotten it; and they still retained the primitive traditions of their race. They took him, he said, to a mountain, and showed him the opening in its side from which the progenitors of their people emerged, when they first "came out of the ground." This notion, which prevails in many countries, is commonly held to be a childish myth, born of a metaphor, through which, as in the case of the ancient Athenians, a people proclaim themselves to be the autochthones of a country. Further inquiry, however, has led to the opinion that the expression, with the resulting myth, has had in many cases another and more intelligible origin. It indicated in the first instance simply that the people believed their ancestors to have come "from below," that is, "from down-stream," or, in the case of an oceanic tribe, "from the leeward." In the present case it probably showed that the Hurons of Quebec believed their progenitors to have ascended the St. Lawrence from an earlier abode nearer the Atlantic Ocean.

Among other informants whom I consulted in my successive visits to Anderdon were two aged men, of considerable ability and some literary attainments, Alexander Clarke, the government interpreter, and his brother, Peter Dooyentate Clarke. They were sons of an English officer by an Indian mother, and had both received some schooling; but they had spent their lives among the Indians, with whose ideas, customs, and legends they were thoroughly familiar. From Peter I received a small printed book, of which he claimed to be the author, and doubtless with truth, though he had evidently had the occasional aid of a more practised hand. It was published in 1870, by Hunter, Rose & Co., of Toronto, and bore the title of "Origin and Traditional History of the Wyandots, and Sketches of Other Indian Tribes of North America." A careful perusal and some conversation with the author left no doubt that he had done his best to give a fair and correct report of the beliefs which pre-

vailed among his people respecting the events of their troubled history.

To make these clear it should be explained that the people to whom the French colonists gave, in their dialect, the nickname of Hurons, or "Shock-heads," from their mode of dressing their hair, were known among themselves, and to other tribes of the same race, as the "Wandat," a word which means simply "of one speech." This name was corrupted by the English to Wyandot, and has now, except in literature and as a geographical expression, superseded the more euphonious French term. The modern Wyandots are mostly descended from a single Huron tribe, the only one which retained its organization when the confederacy was broken up by the Iroquois. This tribe, which originally dwelt apart from the others, in the hilly region about Nottawassaga Bay, was known to its allies and to the French as the Tionontatés, or "People beyond the Mountains," and more commonly to the traders as "the Tobacco Nation" (*Nation du Petun*), from a choice variety of tobacco which they cultivated and sold. They had still another name, as will be hereafter mentioned. In various respects these Tionontatés bore to the other Huron tribes the same relation which the Caniengas (who are commonly known by the nickname of Mohawks) bore to their fellow "nations" of the Iroquois confederacy. They were deemed the oldest in lineage and the highest in civil rank. Their head-chief surpassed in dignity all other chiefs. Their dialect was the source from which the dialects of all the other tribes of their branch were derived. This linguistic paternity and preëminenee of the Mohawk speech among the Iroquois dialects had been already made clear to me by a careful comparison of vocabularies and grammars. My inquiries on the Anderdon Reserve brought out equally convincing evidence of the fact that the speech of the Tionontatés was the oldest in form, not only of the Huron dialects, but of all the Huron-Iroquois languages. It alone, with the doubtful exception of the Cherokee (which bears marks of being a "mixed language"), has retained a labial articulation, the *m*, which, with all other labials, the remaining idioms of that stock have lost.

Of the persistence of ancient names and beliefs in this Huron sept I found remarkable evidence in a story related to me by Chief Mandorong, and confirmed in a singular and unexpected manner from various other quarters. This story, which may be entitled "The Legend of King Sastaretsi," is given in my note-book as follows: —

"In very ancient times the Hurons (or Wandat) had a great king or head-chief, named Sastaretsi. They were then living in the far east, near Quebec, where their forefathers first came out of the ground.

The king told them that they must go to the west, in a certain direction, which he pointed out. He warned them, moreover, that this would not be the end of their wanderings. He instructed them that when he died they should make an oaken image resembling him, should clothe it in his attire, and place it upright at the head of his grave, looking toward the sunrise. When the sunlight should fall upon it, they would see the image turn and look in the direction in which they were to go.

"King Sastaretsi went with his people in their westward journey as far as Lake Huron, and died there. But he had time before his death to draw, on a strip of birch bark, by way of further guidance, an outline of the course which they were to pursue, to reach the country in which they were finally to dwell. They were to pass southward down Lake Huron, and were to continue on until they came to a place where the water narrowed to a river, and this river then turned and entered another great lake.

"When he died they fulfilled his commands. They made an image of oak, exactly resembling their dead king, clothed it in his dress of deerskin, adorned the head with plumes, and painted the face like the face of a chief. They set up this image at the head of the grave, planting it firmly between two strong pieces of timber, its face turned to the east. All the people then stood silently around it in the early dawn. When the rays of the rising sun shone upon it, they saw the image turn with such power that the strong timbers between which it was planted groaned and trembled as it moved. It stayed at length, with its face looking to the south, in the precise direction in which the chief had instructed them to go. Thus his word was fulfilled, and any hesitation which the people had felt about following his injunctions was removed.

"A chosen party, comprising about a dozen of their best warriors, was first sent out in canoes, with the birch-bark map, to follow its tracings and examine the country. They pursued their course down Lake Huron, and through the River and Lake St. Clair, till they came to where the stream narrowed, at what is now Detroit; then advancing further they came, after a brief course, to the broad expanse of Lake Erie. Returning to the narrow stream at Detroit, they said: 'This is the place which King Sastaretsi meant to be the home of our nation.' Then they went back to their people, who, on hearing their report, all embarked together in their canoes and passed southward down the lake, and finally took up their abode in the country about Detroit, which they were to possess as long as they remained a nation. The image of King Sastaretsi was left standing by his grave in the far north, and perhaps it is there to this day."

It will be observed that in this narrative "King Sastaretsi" is described as leading the Hurons in their migration from the east, and as dying just before their return from the northwest to the vicinity of Lake Erie. The time which elapsed between these two events cannot have been less than a century. This portion of the legend, at first perplexing, is explained in a singular and unexpected manner by a passage in the well-known work ("New Voyages to North America") of the French traveller, Baron La Honton, whose descriptions of New France in the period between the years 1683 and 1694 contain the results of much inquiry and acute observation. "The leader of the nation of Hurons," he tells us, "is called Sastaretsi. The name," he adds, "has been kept up by descent for seven or eight hundred years, and is likely to continue to future ages." This practice of keeping up the name of a chief by succession seems to have been common among the tribes of the Huron-Iroquois stock. The names of the fifty chiefs who formed the Iroquois league have been thus preserved for more than four hundred years. The Sastaretsi who led his people from the St. Lawrence to Lake Huron was the predecessor of his namesake whose dying injunctions induced them, after their overthrow and expulsion by the Iroquois, to take refuge about the French forts at Detroit and in northern Ohio.

It is a curious and noticeable fact, however, that neither the Iroquois nor the French are mentioned in this story, nor is any reason given either for the departure of the Hurons from their original home near Quebec, nor for their return from the northwest to the neighborhood of Detroit. The pride of the Indian character refused to admit that their wanderings were determined by any power beyond their own will and the influence of their chief.

The story of the image is probably true in its main incidents, though tradition has added some marvellous details. It was natural that the French, after they had established their forts in Michigan and Ohio, should desire to have the aid of their Indian allies in defending them against the Iroquois and the English. This project would involve the removal of the Hurons from their asylum in the far north to the perilous vicinity of their powerful and dreaded foes. While the leaders might be persuaded, by the arguments and solicitations of their French friends, to take this risk, the majority of the people may have been unwilling to abandon their secure retreat and their cultivated fields. To overcome this hesitation, it would be natural also for the chiefs to employ some artifice. Of this species of management, to which the leading men among the Hurons and Iroquois were wont to resort in dealing with their self-willed but credulous people, many curious and amusing examples are related by the

early missionaries. In the present instance, it would seem that an appeal was made to the reverence with which the memory of their deceased head-chief was regarded. A rude image of him was set up with much formality, and a report was circulated of a death-bed prediction made by him concerning it. Early in the morning after its erection the image was found to have preternaturally changed its position, and to be gazing in the direction in which the great chief, in his lifetime, had desired that his people should go. This monition from the dead was effectual, and the emigration at once took place. The legend, as told in after times, assumed naturally a more lively and striking cast ; but in its leading outlines it is intelligible and credible enough. Its chief interest, however, resides in the fact that it proves beyond question the existence of a belief among the Wyandots of the present day that their ancestors came to the west, at no very distant period, from the vicinity of Quebec.

The casual references which are made to this subject in the Jesuit "Relations" deserve to be noticed. In general the missionaries, while describing with much particularity the customs and religious rites of the Indians, and in fact every matter which seemed to have any bearing on the work of their conversion, took no pains to record any facts relating to the early history of the tribes. Only a casual allusion apprises us that the former residence of the Hurons near the coast was spoken of among them as a well-known fact. The "Relations" for 1636 contain a full and detailed account of the Huron nation by Brebeuf, — an admirable work, from which our knowledge of that people in their primitive state is chiefly drawn. In speaking of their festivities, he ascribes the origin of some of their dances to the teaching of a certain being, "rather a giant than a man," whom the people encountered at the time when they lived by the seaside (*lors qu'ils habitoient sur le bord de la mer*).

The other allusion seems, at the first glance, to bear a different interpretation. It has been quoted by Gallatin and others as affording evidence that the people whom Cartier encountered on the St. Lawrence were Iroquois ; but a careful consideration of the facts, in the light of recent information, shows that this inference cannot properly be drawn from it. Father Le Jeune writes from the vicinity of Quebec in 1636 : "I have often sailed from Quebec to Three Rivers. The country is fine and very attractive. The Indians showed me some places where the Iroquois formerly cultivated the land." These Indians were of the Algonkin race, and their statement, which we need not question, merely shows that their immediate predecessors in that locality were Iroquois. If, as the traditions of the Hurons affirm, the flight of their ancestors from their eastern abode was caused by the attacks of the Iroquois, we may be certain

that these conquerors did not leave the deserted country vacant. Their first proceeding would be to assume possession of it, and to plant colonies at favorable points. This was their custom in all their conquests. An Iroquois colony was thus established at Shamokin, now Sunbury, in Pennsylvania, after the Delawares were subdued; and other settlements secured the territories which the confederacy acquired in northern Ohio. Thus it would seem probable that, after the flight of the Hurons, the Iroquois held their lands along the northern bank of the St. Lawrence for a considerable time. At length, however, the annoyance and loss from the incessant attacks of the surrounding Algonkins became so intolerable as to make these distant outposts not worth keeping. Their abandonment apparently did not long precede the arrival of Champlain, who, as is well known, found the Hurons and the Algonkins united in strict alliance, and engaged in a deadly warfare with the Iroquois.

On another occasion, Chief Mandorong gave me an account of the origin of the war between the Hurons and the Iroquois, which caused his people to leave their eastern abode. The two communities were living near each other, beside the mountain from which their ancestors had issued. They dwelt on opposite sides of the mountain, and apparently of the river, though the latter point was left in some obscurity in the narrative. To prevent differences, the chiefs had forbidden the people of the two tribes to intermarry. An Iroquois warrior at length transgressed this interdict, and married a Huron woman She incurred his anger by some misconduct, and was killed by him. The chiefs of the two tribes held a conference, and agreed that, as she seemed to have merited her fate, her husband should go unpunished. This decision, however, did not satisfy her kinsmen. One of them went secretly into the country of the Iroquois, and killed a man of that people. Thereupon a war arose between the two nations. Many conflicts took place, in which the Hurons generally had the best. At last, however, by an act of treachery, the Iroquois got possession of the Huron town during a truce, when the men were absent from it, holding a council elsewhere, and killed all the women and children. When the Huron warriors returned and found their wives and children massacred, their grief and wrath knew no bounds. They pursued and overtook the murderers (as the chief affirmed) and slew them to the last man. They then quitted the mountain near Quebec, and scattered themselves over the country. This statement may be taken as sufficient evidence that what they had suffered was really an overwhelming defeat. That this was the belief of the chief was evident from what he immediately added, — that there were some families which had not been included in the massacre, having been in the woods, hunting or otherwise engaged,

at the time, and from them all the Wyandots are descended. He further said that the missionaries were in the country at the time of the final dispersion, though not at the beginning of the war. It was evident that he looked upon the war as a secular strife, which began in early times in the far east, and was fought out through many years and successive stages of westward flight and pursuit, until it culminated near Lake Huron in the terrible conflicts witnessed and recorded by the Jesuit missionaries, several of whom perished in its final agonies. If we wish to picture to ourselves the incidents which, at the outset of the war, preceded, accompanied, and followed the fall of Hochelaga, we have only to turn to the pages in which Parkman, in his work already referred to, has related the closing scenes of the same contest.

The traditions preserved by Peter Clarke in his book accord in general with those related to me by Chief Joseph White, differing just enough to show that the two narratives are the independent testimonies of honest reporters. "From traditional accounts," writes Clarke, "the Wyandots once inhabited a country northeastward from the mouth of the St. Lawrence, or somewhere along the gulf coast, before they ever met with the French or any European adventurers." At a later period, "during the first quarter of the sixteenth century," as he thinks, — though his chronology must be mainly conjectural, — a rupture took place between the Wyandots and the Iroquois (whom Clarke generally designates by the name of their largest tribe, the Senecas), "while they were peaceably sojourning together, in separate villages, within the vicinity of what is now Montreal." "At this time," he adds, "and back to an unknown period, the Iroquois and Wyandots had always dwelt in the same region, where their abodes and hunting-grounds were conterminous." There are, he says, conflicting accounts of the cause which led to the quarrel. "Some say that it commenced about a Seneca maiden and a chief's son." The wrongs of the maiden led to the assassination of a Seneca chief by a Wyandot warrior. It is a curious fact, and a strong evidence of the truthfulness of the narrative, or at least of the narrators, that both Clarke and White admitted that their own people were in fault at the beginning of the war. The result is told alike in both narratives, but with more particularity by Clarke. The Wyandots "broke up their villages and journeyed westward," until they reached Niagara. Here they remained a considerable time, and then "migrated northward to where the city of Toronto now stands." Thence after a time, in fear of the Iroquois, they retreated still further to the north, until they reached Lake Huron. Here they found game abundant, and abode for many years. And here they were joined by a band of their own people, who had remained

on the Ottawa River. These doubtless composed that branch of the Huron nation which had separated from the Tionontatés on the overthrow of the Hochelagan dominion, and had retreated from Montreal up the Ottawa River. It was along this river that Champlain and the French missionaries followed the traces of these fugitives early in the seventeenth century. From this northern refuge on the Georgian Bay, Champlain, with a party of his soldiers, led a Huron army into the region south of Lake Ontario, on an expedition against the Iroquois, which ended disastrously. Had the result been otherwise and the Iroquois been crushed, as the assailants expected, the course of North American history would undoubtedly have been widely deflected. The attack of Champlain and his redskin allies was soon terribly avenged by the Iroquois warriors, whose raids broke up the Huron towns, and kept back the French settlements for more than a century, while the English colonies were gathering strength.

The flight of the Tionontatés, first to Michilimackinac and thence to the neighborhood of Detroit, is narrated by Clarke at some length. In connection with the latter movement is mentioned "the last of the ancient line of head-chiefs or kings of pure Wyandot blood, named Suts-tau-ra-tse." He is spoken of as living about the middle of the eighteenth century, and is said to have died at a great age in its last decade. He was probably the grandson of the King Sastaretsi of my friend Mandorong's legend; and there can be little doubt that he was the person who was seen in his boyhood by Charlevoix, when that historian visited Detroit as the guest of the commandant, Tonti, in 1721. He describes a great meeting of the neighboring tribes, Huron and Algonkin, which was called by the commandant to receive a message from the governor. "Sastaretsi," writes Charlevoix, "whom our Frenchmen call the king of the Hurons (and who is in fact the hereditary chief of the Tionontatés, who are the true Hurons), was present. But as he is still a minor, he came merely for the form. His uncle, who governs for him and who is styled the Regent, spoke in his stead, in the quality of the orator of the nation. When a council is held, the honor of speaking for all the tribes is commonly conferred upon the Hurons."

On another occasion this noted name turned up unexpectedly. In obtaining from my Iroquois friends a list of the Indian tribes with which they were acquainted, I received from them two names for the Tionontatés, in addition to the latter name, which was merely a local designation. One of the names was Wanat, the Iroquois form of Wandat; the other was *Sastaretsi*. It is not uncommon for an Indian tribe, of the Huron-Iroquois stock, to be named from its principal hereditary chief. A common name of the Mohawks was the plural form of the title of their leading chief, Tekarihoken.

An important confirmation of the tradition received from the Anderdon Wyandots is furnished by a high authority. That accomplished ethnologist and careful investigator, the late Sir Daniel Wilson, contributed to the transactions of the Royal Society of Canada for 1884 an admirable paper, entitled "The Huron-Iroquois, — a Typical Race." This paper is reprinted in his latest volume, "The Lost Atlantis and other Ethnographic Studies," and should be consulted by every student of this interesting subject. He had visited the Hurons of Lorette, near Quebec, already referred to, — a small band of some three hundred half-castes, descended from Huron refugees who found an asylum in that quarter after the destruction of their towns in the west by the Iroquois. In referring to the story told me by the Anderdon chief, Joseph White, Sir Daniel Wilson, adds: "The late Huron chief, Tahourenche, or François Xavier Picard, communicated to me the same legendary tradition of the indigenous origin of his people; telling me, though with a smile, that they came out of the side of a mountain between Quebec and the great sea. He connected this with other incidents, all pointing to a traditional belief that the northern shores of the lower St. Lawrence were the original home of the race; and he spoke of certain ancient events in the history of his people as having occurred when they lived beside the big sea."

All these facts, taken together, seem to lead to conclusions of great importance with regard to the value of traditional evidence. It is plain that until recently this evidence has been seriously undervalued. Our students of history have been too generally a book-worshipping race, unwilling to accept any testimony with regard to ancient events which is not found in some contemporary page, either written or printed. It is not half a century since a distinguished English author, eminent both as a statesman and as a philologist, pronounced the opinion that no tradition can be trusted which is more than a hundred years old. At the time when this opinion was put forth by Sir George C. Lewis, many voyagers and missionaries in the Pacific Islands were accumulating traditional testimony of vast extent and varied origin, which is now admitted on all hands to prove the occurrence of events that must have taken place at successive periods extending over the last two thousand years. The "Brief History of the Hawaiian People," by Prof. W. D. Alexander of Honolulu, published in 1891 "by order of the Board of Education of the Hawaiian Kingdom," recounts as unquestionable facts many voyages, migrations, battles, royal and priestly accessions, marriages, and deaths which have occurred in the Sandwich Islands and other groups, from the eleventh century to our own time. At the other extremity of the great ocean, the "Polynesian Society," established

at Wellington, New Zealand, has published in its excellent quarterly journal communications from able contributors relating to various island histories, and carrying these back, with the aid of numerous mutually confirmatory genealogies, for many centuries, with unhesitating belief in their general truth. In this way the history of the peopling of the vast Polynesian region, extending over a space larger than North America, and covering at least twenty centuries, is gradually becoming known to us as surely, if not as minutely, as that of the countries of Europe during the same period.

The question naturally arises whether we may not hope to recover the history of aboriginal America for at least the same length of time. The facts now recorded will show that the few dispersed members of the Huron-Iroquois stock retain to this day, after many wanderings, clear traditions of a time, which cannot have been less than four centuries ago, when their ancestors dwelt on the northern coast of the St. Lawrence Gulf. The historical traditions of the Delawares, retained in memory by their famous Picture Record, styled the *Walam Olum*, or Red Score, which has been carefully published and admirably elucidated by Dr. Brinton in his volume, "The Lenâpé and their Legends," seem to go back for more than thrice that period. And the conclusions derived from these sources have been lately confirmed and enlarged by a series of important investigations relating to almost every branch of the fifty-eight aboriginal stocks which have been found to exist between Mexico and the Arctic Ocean. In these studies, in which, besides the names already mentioned, those of many members of the Bureau of Ethnology, the Peabody Museum, the Hemenway Expedition, the Royal Society of Canada, and its affiliated Associations, the American Antiquarian Society, the American Folk-Lore Society, and several historical societies, have been honorably conspicuous, we have the gratifying earnest of large future gains to historical and ethnological science which are to be expected from this source. We have every reason to feel assured that in the three hundred Indian reservations and recognized bands of the United States and Canada, with populations varying from less than a hundred to more than twenty thousand, and comprising now many men and women of good education and superior intelligence, there are mines of traditional lore, ready to yield returns of inestimable value to well-qualified and sympathetic explorers.

Horatio Hale.

NOTE. — This paper was prepared for the World's Congress of Anthropology, held at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, in August and September, 1893, and will appear in the volume of Proceedings of the Congress.

THE JOURNAL OF

AMERICAN FOLK-LORE.

VOL. III.—JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1890.—No. X.

"ABOVE" AND "BELOW."

A MYTHOLOGICAL DISEASE OF LANGUAGE.

NEARLY thirty years have passed since Professor Max Müller, in the first lecture of his earliest series on the "Science of Language," put forth the now famous apothegm in which he declared mythology to be "a disease of language." The long controversy which this striking expression awakened has not yet died away; but probably the distinguished author would be willing to admit that the phrase, if regarded as a complete statement, was too sweeping in its generality. His critics, however, must in candor be equally ready to allow that it comprises a large measure of truth. No one, indeed, can have collected and investigated the myths of primitive tribes without finding frequent illustrations of this truth. Three of them may here be specially mentioned, as they will be found to be directly connected with the general subject of this essay.

When the well-known confederacy of the five (afterwards six) Iroquois nations, which has played so important a part in American history, was established, about four hundred years ago, the three leading personages in the convention which framed the league were Hiawatha (*Hayonwatha*), who was born an Onondaga and afterwards adopted by the Caniengas, or Mohawks; Dekanawidah (*Tekanawita*), a high chief of the Mohawks; and Atotarho, head-chief of the Onondagas. These were all unquestionably historical characters, whose origin, qualities, and deeds are as clearly retained in memory, and as confidently set forth at this day by the record-keepers of the tribes as are those of the founders of the American constitution by the historians of our time. Yet, as might be expected among unlettered communities, each of them has become the subject, with the mass of the Iroquois people, of mythological tales, growing out of the perversion of native terms. *Atotarho*, a participle of the verb *otarhon*, signifies "entangled." There is no reason to

suppose that this name was given to the great Onondaga chief with any personal application. It was doubtless one which his parents selected for him, in his childhood, out of the many "clan names" belonging to his *gens*. He grew up a man of extraordinary force of character, of a domineering temper, fierce, wily, and unscrupulous in his methods, but with a firm determination to make his people the first of Indian nations, and himself their acknowledged and unresisted leader. By craft or force he put to death or drove into exile all the rival chiefs who opposed him ; and he reduced several of the nearest tribes to subjection. The common people among the Iroquois have legendary stories of him as a terrible wizard who, by some mysterious power, could destroy his enemies from a distance, and whose head, in lieu of hair, was crowned with an *entangled* mass of writhing and hissing serpents. In this guise he is represented in the curious "History of the Six Nations," by the Tuscarora annalist, Cusick. The old Onondaga record-keepers smile at the story and the picture. They tell you that Atotarho, though crafty, ambitious, and cruel, did not lack great qualities. He was clear-headed and patriotic enough to appreciate the benefits of the league, and finally to join it, on condition that his people should be the leading nation, and himself the leading chief of the confederation.

Among those Onondaga chiefs who at first resisted the ambitious schemes of Atotarho was Hiawatha. Having lost a favorite daughter, whose death was caused by the machinations of Atotarho, and fearing for his own life, he fled to the Mohawks, where he was received by their great chief Dekanawidah, and with him concerted the measures which led to the establishment of the league. The name of Hiawatha, or Hayonwatha (derived from *ayonni*, wampum-belt, and *katha*, to make), signifies "He who makes the wampum-belt."[1] This also was probably an ordinary clan name, given to him in childhood ; but it has led among the Iroquois to the belief that he was the inventor of wampum, — the Indian shell-money and mnemonic symbol, — an invention which, as the ancient mound-relics attest, was in use for centuries before his birth. Some other still more notable legends relating to this famous chief will be hereafter referred to.

The myth concerning Dekanawidah arose, not from his name, but from an expression used by or concerning him. The names of the fifty-one chiefs who formed the first council of the league have, all but one, been continued in use, the successor of each chief assuming and

[1] In my volume, *The Iroquois Book of Rites* (page 20), the name is rendered, on the authority of an interpreter, "He who seeks the wampum-belt." Later information satisfied me that the version in the text is the true one. See the same volume, p. 154.

bearing, as his honorary title, the name of the first chief of his line, — precisely as the title of an English peer is assumed by his heir. This is termed, in the Indian style of speech, a repeated resurrection of the first chief. But Dekanawidah, who deemed himself with some justice the actual author of the league (though Hiawatha had first proposed it), refused to be thus represented. "Let the others have successors," he said proudly, "for others can advise you like them. But I am the founder of your confederacy; and no one else can do what I have done."[1] Thus he is said, in Indian metaphor, to have "buried himself," for the purpose of avoiding this political resurrection. His dying injunction has given rise among the common Iroquois to a whimsical belief, which is scouted by their record-keepers. "Some of our people will tell you," said my intelligent friend, John Buck (*Skanawati*), now the leading Onondaga chief, "that Tekanawita dug a grave and buried himself in it. But they do not understand what the saying means."

Here are three curious myths which have arisen within four centuries about well-known historical characters, purely as the result of a "disease of language," — or, in other terms, of a misapprehension of the meaning of words. We have now to consider another misapprehension, which has a far wider and more important bearing.

In the year 1743, the Moravian missionary, Christopher Pyrlæus, visited the Mohawk country, and remained long enough to acquire some knowledge of the language and traditions of the people. These he has recorded in a work still preserved in manuscript, from which subsequent inquirers have drawn valuable information. His account of the tradition of the Iroquois people respecting their origin, or rather their first appearance in the land where he found them, has been quoted by Heckewelder in his "History of the Indian Nations," and by Mr. A. S. Gatschet in the "American Antiquarian" for October, 1881. The later version seems to be the more literally accurate, and is in the following terms: —

"At first our Indians lived in the ground; they were in the darkness, and could not see the sun. Hunting was of no avail, and all the food they obtained was moles. When they perceived moles, they smote them to death with their hands. By a mere chance, Ganawagéhha discovered an issue out of the earth, followed it up, and walked around on the surface. There he found a dead deer, cut it up, carried the meat into the ground, and gave it to the others. They tasted of it, found it palatable, and when he described to them sunlight and the beauty of nature above, the mothers resolved to ascend to the surface, with their families. Here they began to plant maize and other vegetables. One creature alone

[1] See the *Iroquois Book of Rites*, p. 31.

declined to go with the others, and it still remains underground. It is the woodchuck, or groundhog, — *nocharaúoront.*"

"However ridiculous these stories are," remarks Heckewelder, "the belief of the Indians in them is not to be shaken." In fact, a hundred years after the visit of Pyrlæus, David Cusick, the Tuscarora historian, refers to the same story. He tells us that, through some unexplained cause, "a body of people was concealed in the mountain at the Falls named Kuskesawkich, — now Oswego." Being "released from the mountain," they followed the line of march traced out for them by their great deity, Tarenyawago (Taronhiawakon), "The Holder of the Heavens," and thus spreading themselves gradually over the country, became the ancestors of the Iroquois nations. In the same work in which he records this tradition, he gives another, which in the main is pure history, and is confirmed from many sources. This historical narrative fully explains the other story, and shows it to be only ridiculous in the same manner in which the story of Atotarho and his snaky hair is ridiculous, — that is, in the growth of an absurd fable out of the misapprehension of a word. Like other writers who have preserved for us the traditions of the Iroquois and their congeners, the Hurons, Cusick informs us that these tribes formerly dwelt together on the northern shore of the lower St. Lawrence. There they quarrelled, and a desperate warfare arose between the two septs of the great Huron-Iroquois race. Cusick does not add the sequel, which we learn from other sources.[1] The Iroquois ascended the river, landed at Oswego, and, gradually advancing, occupied a great portion of the country south of Lake Ontario. Their former country was then, as the water flowed, far "below" them. They had come "up" from it. We still speak of "Upper Canada" and "Lower Canada." The words which the first Iroquois fugitives from the lower country employed in the usual geographical sense, as it may be termed, were understood by many of their descendants literally. From the common people among the Mohawks, Pyrlæus learned that their forefathers had come "up out of the ground," under the guidance of an enterprising leader, Ganawagéhha; but if he had applied to the Onondaga chiefs, the official record-keepers of the confederacy, he would undoubtedly have been told, as later inquirers have been, that their

[1] See Colden, *History of the Five Nations*, vol. i. p. 23 (3d edit.); Morgan, *League of the Iroquois*, p. 5; Peter Dooyentate Clarke, *Origin and Traditional History of the Wyandots*, p. 1. Colden and Morgan ascribe the expulsion of the Iroquois to the Adirondacks, a branch of the Algonkin race; but the native writers, Cusick and Clarke, better informed (though naturally uncertain in their chronology), describe particularly this beginning of the disastrous rupture and feud between the two great divisions of the Huron-Iroquois people.

ancestors were conducted by their chiefs "up the river," from that lower country in which Montreal and Quebec are now situated. That one of their leaders may have received, either then or later, the name — highly appropriate for the guide of such an expedition — of *Kanawakéha*, "The Lynx," is probable enough.

A similar duplicate tradition, as it may be styled, prevailed among the Hurons, — in one version relating an historical fact, and in the other giving an absurd mythological perversion of that fact. When in 1872 I visited the remnant of the Wyandots, or western Hurons, on their reservation near Amherstburg, I learned from their intelligent chief, Joseph White (Mandarong), among other curious folklore, the legend of the first emergence of his people from their subterranean home near what is now Quebec. He informed me that he had once visited the Hurons of Lorette, near that city, and was taken by them to see the very opening in the side of a mountain from which their ancestors came forth. The early Jesuit missionaries have preserved the fact from which this legend took its rise. In their "Relations" for 1636, Brebeuf, in his general description of the Hurons, records incidentally the information which he received from them, that their people formerly "lived near the sea." "Near the sea" would be, geographically, "below Quebec." A mythological perversion of language made it "underneath Quebec."

This simple solution is a key to many mysteries. The preposterous tales which have amused and perplexed many travellers and ethnologists find in it a ready explanation. Thus Dr. Washington Matthews, in his excellent account of the Hidatsa (or Minnetaree) Indians, informs us that, according to their legendary history, their people "originally dwelt beneath the surface of a great body of water, situate to the northeast of their present home. From this subaqueous residence some persons found their way out, and, discovering a country much better than that in which they resided, returned and gave to their people such glowing accounts of their discoveries that the whole people determined to come out. Owing to the breaking of a tree, on which they were climbing out of the lake, a great part of the tribe had to remain behind in the water, and are there yet."[1] In giving us the myth, Dr. Matthews, unlike many investigators, adds the fact which enables us to explain it. "Recently," he continues, "the story-tellers say that the water out of which they came is the Minnewakan, or 'Devil's Lake,' in Northern Dakota. This lake is called by the Hidatsas 'Midihopa,' which, like the Dakota name, signifies sacred or mysterious water." If the Hidatsa people formerly lived on the river which is the outlet of this lake, they would have been, in common parlance, "below the lake." The

[1] See the Introduction to the *Grammar and Dictionary of the Hidatsa*, p. xvii.

tree is an ordinary symbol by which the Indian tribes describe a political confederacy. The "great pine-tree" is the figurative expression constantly employed by the Iroquois orators in referring to their league. The breaking of the Hidatsa tree was merely the disruption of the union which had held the septs of their people together.

Illustrations of this curious phase of mythology crowd upon us from many quarters. For one of the most striking we must return to the popular history of Hiawatha. The Mohawk legend, which was accepted by the common people among the other Iroquois nations, relates that he came down from the skies among them in a white canoe, to be their great reformer and peace-maker, and that he finally disappeared by ascending to the heavens in the same manner. A canoe is a singular device for aerial navigation, and we are at once led to suspect a hidden meaning in the story. This meaning was quite unexpectedly revealed in the biography of Hiawatha which I received from the Onondaga record-keepers on the Canadian reservation of the Six Nations, and which was afterwards fully confirmed by their brethren, the official annalists of the New York Onondagas. These authorities agreed in affirming that, as has been already mentioned, Hiawatha was originally an Onondaga chief, noted for his magnanimous and peace-loving disposition; and that, being driven from his nation by the wiles and threats of Atotarho, he fled eastward to the powerful tribe of the Caniengas, or Mohawks. The route taken by him in this hegira — which, like that of Mohammed in Arabia, is the great epoch of native history — is minutely described in their traditional narrative. After various adventures the fugitive chief reached the head-waters of the Mohawk River. Here he either found or constructed a canoe, doubtless of the white birch-bark, and in it floated *down* the river to the palisaded stronghold which was the residence of the great Canienga chief, Dekanawidah. Through his influence Hiawatha was adopted by the Mohawks, and was made a high chief of the nation. When by their joint efforts the confederacy was established, the affection of Hiawatha for the place of his birth revived. He returned westward in his old age to the country of the Onondagas, where he died. As his coming to the Mohawks down their river in his white canoe was a descent, so his departure from them to die among his own people in their hill-country was an ascent. It is easy to see how readily and naturally the true tradition became transmuted into the popular legend. And it is not a little curious to note how happily the insight of a man of genius has penetrated and interpreted this popular fantasy. Longfellow, using a large poetic license, has transported the hero, with his Iroquois name, to the shores of Lake

Superior, and has made him an Ojibway chief; but he has preserved the outlines of his character, and in some respects of his history. In the well-known closing scene, "Hiawatha's Departure," we are told how, after his final address to his people, the chief

> On the clear and luminous water
> Launched his birch canoe for sailing.
> And the evening sun descending
> Set the clouds on fire with redness, . . .
> And the people from the margin
> Watched him floating, rising, sinking,
> Till the birch canoe seemed lifted
> High into that sea of splendor.

We are thus naturally led into a still wider and more important view of the influence of this remarkable perversion of language on the legendary beliefs and religious opinions of mankind. In many if not all cases, the belief of each people concerning the future life — that is, concerning the abode of the spirit after death — is connected with their belief concerning the origin of mankind, or at least of their own race; and these beliefs are largely influenced by this peculiar confusion in the meaning of words expressive of local relations. It should be observed that the terms "above" and "below," as expressing the relative position of places on the surface of the globe, have a different application when used at sea or on the seacoast from that which is customary in the interior of a continent. In the latter case, as has been seen, "above" or "upward" signifies up-stream, and "below" down-stream, — as in "Upper Egypt" and "Lower Egypt," "Upper Canada" and "Lower Canada." On the ocean, however, or along the seacoast, these expressions apply to the prevailing winds. The mariner makes his way "up" against the wind, or "down" before it. In the temperate zone, where westerly winds prevail, the east is "below." The sailors of the Massachusetts seaports invariably speak of the coast of Maine as "down east." On the other hand, within the tropics, where the trade-winds blow steadily from the east, the west is "below." Many years ago, in studying the legendary history and the religions of the natives of the Pacific Islands, I found their whole mythology colored by the influence of these expressions.

Throughout the widespread clusters of southern and western Polynesia, from the Hawaiian group to New Zealand, — comprising, besides these islands, the Marquesas, the Tahitian or Society group, and the Hervey, Austral, and Gambier clusters, — the belief everywhere prevailed among the people that their ancestors came originally from a country bearing a name which had many dialectical variations, all referring back to one original form. This form was

Savaiki. The variations, which followed rules as fixed and regular as those of the Aryan tongues under the well-known "Grimm's law," made this word, in the different Polynesian idioms, *Savai'i* (where the apostrophe represents a slight catching of the breath, evidently due to the dropping of the *k* sound), *Havaiki*, *Hawaiki*, *Avaiki*, *Havai'i*, and *Hawai'i.* But the opinions which prevailed in regard to the position of this land varied widely from group to group. In Tahiti, the tradition concerning it was purely historical and strictly true. An intelligent native, who drew for Captain Cook a map of all the islands known to his people, made Havai'i (the Tahitian form of the name) a very large island in the far west; and he added the information, "It is the mother of all the islands." The inquiries which we were able to make — and which have been fully confirmed by many later investigators — leave no doubt that this great mother of the Polynesian family was Savai'i (anciently Savaiki), the westernmost and largest island of the Navigator group, now better known perhaps as the Samoan Islands. The New Zealanders have a similarly clear and intelligible tradition concerning the "Hawaiki" from which their ancestors came. But as we go farther the tradition assumes a different form, and becomes mythological. The people of the Marquesas, as we are told by the Rev. Mr. Stewart in his "Visit to the South Seas," believe that "the land composing their islands was once located in Havaiki, or the regions below, — the abode of departed spirits, — and that they rose from thence through the efforts of a god beneath them." Here we find, in a single sentence, a true tradition shown as giving rise, through a "disease of language," to an article of religious belief. The Samoan island of Savaiki (or Savai'i), from which the ancestors of the Marquesans undoubtedly emigrated, — an island far to the westward, and consequently, in nautical language, "below" the Marquesans, — becomes, after the lapse of many generations, a subterranean region, whence, by the efforts of their deified ancestor, their own island was raised, and to which their own spirits are destined to return. A similar belief has been found at Rarotonga, in the Hervey Islands. There Avaiki (the form which *Savaiki* takes in the local dialect) is "the country beneath," from which the first man, Mumuki, ascended to look for food. Proceeding still farther west, we come to the Gambier group, which is believed to have been peopled from the Hervey cluster. Here, at the third remove, the "disease of language" has actually overpowered the myth, and, so to speak, eaten it away. *Avaiki* is no longer even a place; it has become simply an adverb. In the dictionary of the language compiled by the French missionary, M. Maigret, the

word *avaiki* is defined as "below, beneath," and is opposed to *runga*, the ordinary Polynesian word for "above." [1]

But Savaiki is not the only Polynesian Elysium or Hades. The people of the actual Savaiki, or Savai'i, the great Samoan island, had, of course, their own belief in a future abode. This legend and belief took a twofold form. According to what was clearly the primitive and really historical tradition, which prevailed both in the Samoan Islands and the neighboring Tonga (or Friendly) group, and was well known in the Vitian (or Feejee) cluster, their ancestors came from a distant island, situated far in the west or north-west, and known as *Burótu*, or, with the usual dialectical variations, as *Bulótu*, *Purótu*, and *Pulótu*. One version of the story made this island an earthly paradise, inhabited by divinities;[2] while another, and apparently still older, account represented it as the abode of a powerful and warlike people, who were frequently engaged in domestic and foreign conflicts. In one of their intestine struggles a defeated party fled eastward to the Samoan group, and gave to one of its islands next in size to Savaiki the name (Upólu) of the chief town of their native country.[3] The tradition, which in this shape was doubtless authentic history, became afterwards transformed, by the usual mythological corruption, in a manner somewhat similar to that which, at a far later day, affected the story of the emigration from Savaiki. The ancestral Burótu, or Pulótu, situated in the west, became at length, in the common belief, the Samoan Hades, a region beneath the ocean. To this subaqueous elysium the departed spirits descended through two openings in the rocks, the one for nobles, the other for the common people, situated at the extreme western end of Savai'i. Here they found "heavens, earth, and sea, fruits and flowers, planting, fishing, and cooking, marrying and giving in marriage, — all very much as in the world from which they had gone." [4]

As we are able to localize the Hades of the eastern Polynesians — Havaiki, Havai'i, Avaiki — in their mother island, the Samoan Savai'i or Savaiki, so what has been deemed at least a probable suggestion has been made for finding the Samoan Burótu in a well-known island of the East Indian Archipelago, which figures on the map as *Booro*, — the easternmost island of that archipelago inhabited by the yellow Malayo-Polynesian race. The final syllable *tu* is

[1] These particulars are condensed from the chapter on "Oceanic Migrations," in my *Ethnography and Philology*, vol. vii. of the series relating to the U. S. Exploring Expedition under Wilkes.

[2] See Mariner's *Tonga Islands*, vol. ii. p. 102 (edit. of 1827).

[3] Turner's *Samoa*, p. 227. See, also, p. 222.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 259.

supposed to be the same that is found in the Polynesian *atua*, god, and *aitu*, spirit, and in the Malayan *tuan*, lord, and *hautu*, spirit. The composite name — after the analogy of Tonga-tabu and Niua-tabu ("Sacred Tonga," "Sacred Niua") — would signify "Booro the Sacred, or Divine."[1]

These Polynesian examples show how the belief in a subterranean Hades may be readily explained. The story of Hiawatha's departure explains as readily the opposite tenet of a heavenly Paradise. The twofold belief of the Hurons, as preserved for us by two of the best observers among the early French missionaries, affords a striking confirmation of this view. The illustrious scholar and martyr, Jean de Brébeuf, informs us that the Hurons believed the dwelling of departed spirits to be "a great village" which was attained by a long journey towards the setting sun.[2] Another and equally trustworthy author, the Recollect Gabriel Sagard, also places this abode in the far west, but in an upper region, whither the spirits arrive by way of the stars, travelling along the Milky Way, which is known as the "pathway of souls."[3] The discrepancy in these accounts is easily reconciled. In the view of the Hurons, any traveller, whether an Indian hunter or a disembodied spirit, proceeding westward from their country on Lake Huron to the farthest point known to them, was constantly ascending, as in fact he was going up-stream. To one native mythologist, of a prosaic habit of thought, this passage of the spirits would seem a wearisome land journey, leading gradually upward. Another, of a more imaginative turn, would trace the ascent in a more spiritual and ethereal fashion, by way of the starry firmament. Why both legends find the spirit abode in the far west may probably be explained by the most ancient of Huron cosmogonical legends, the story which makes Aataentsic, — the creatrix of this lower earth and ancestress of its inhabitants, — to have fallen, or cast herself down, from her home in the skies; or, in other words, to have descended from the upper region of the west to the lower St. Lawrence.[4] This primitive legend is in no way inconsistent with that which represents the Hurons as coming "out of the ground" below Quebec. The former expresses the opinion of the united Huron-Iroquois people as to the direction from which, in

[1] See the subject discussed in the essay on "Oceanic Migrations," before referred to.

[2] *Relations des Jésuites*, 1636, p. 105.

[3] Sagard, *Le Grand Voyage au Pays des Hurons*, p. 233; and *Histoire du Canada*, p. 497.

[4] Brébeuf, in the *Relations des Jésuites*, 1636, p. 101. See, also, D. G. Brinton *American Hero-Myths*, p. 53. One of the forms of this myth, recorded by Brébeuf, makes the descent of Aataentsic result from the rupture and sinking of a tree, by which, of course, is meant the breaking-up of a tribal community.

some previous era, their ancestors found their way to the lower waters of the St. Lawrence. The latter refers to a much more recent event in their history, — the separation of the different septs, when they reascended the river, and sought in Upper Canada, in New York, and still farther west and south, the larger space required for their increased numbers.

It remains to consider whether the conclusions suggested by the facts thus brought together may not throw some light on certain more famous mythological beliefs. Whatever opinion may be held on the question of the primitive seat of the Aryan race, there has never been a doubt that the Indic branch of this race was derived from Central Asia, and that it made its first appearance in Hindostan by a gradual descent along the Indus and the great rivers of the Punjâb. We might naturally suppose that the return of their parting souls to the home of their ancestors would be regarded as an ascent, which, according to the usual mythological interpretation, would not stop short of the skies. Thus we may explain how it came that the Vedic Paradise (Paralôka) was situated "above the clouds." In this Paradise unalloyed happiness prevailed; "satisfaction was born with desire."[1] This belief is more vividly expressed in the remarkable prayer to Soma, thus translated by Professor Max Müller from the Rig-veda: —

> Where there is eternal light, in the world where the sun is placed, in that immortal, imperishable world place me, O Soma!
> Where King Vaivasvata reigns, where the secret place of heaven is, where these mighty waters are, there make me immortal!
> Where life is free, in the third heaven of heavens, where the worlds are radiant, there make me immortal!
> Where wishes and desires are, where the bowl of the bright Soma is, where there is food and rejoicing, there make me immortal!
> Where there is happiness and delight, where joy and pleasure reside, where the desires of our desire are attained, there make me immortal.[2]

These are noteworthy expressions. King Vaivasvata is in the Vedic mythology another name of the first man, Yama, and is identical with the first king, Yima, in the Medo-Persian mythology, who reigned over the Aryan race in its primitive seat, Aryanem vaêjo, during its golden age.[3] In this reference we seem to find evidence that the Vedic paradise of departed souls, elevated above the clouds, was in fact (like the Burótu and Havaiki of the Polynesians) simply a glorified reminiscence of the earlier abode of the race, where its

[1] Quoted by Dr. C. Letourneau, in *Sociologie d'après l'Ethnographie*, p. 267, from E. Bournouf, *Essai sur le Véda*.

[2] *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i. p. 46 (Am. edition).

[3] See Rawlinson, *The Seven Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World*, vol. ii. p. 58 (Am. edit.) and foot-note.

wandering tribes led a free and vigorous life, amid their abundant herds, on the lofty Bactrian plateau.

A striking contrast to this inspiring vision is found in the gloomy and repellent picture which the Hebrews had formed of the dwelling of the departed. "The Hebrew Sheôl," say the Old Testament Revisers in their Preface, "which signifies the abode of departed spirits, and corresponds to the Greek Hades, or the under-world, is variously rendered in the Authorized Version by 'grave,' 'pit,' and 'hell.'" Dr. E. B. Tylor, bringing together, with his usual carefulness and discernment, the passages in which the Hebrew belief is made apparent, thus sums up the result: —

Sheol is a special locality where dead men go to their dead ancestors: "And Isaac gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people, . . . and Esau and Jacob his sons buried him." Abraham, though not even buried in the land of his forefathers, is thus "gathered unto his people;" and Jacob has no thought of his body being laid with Joseph's body, torn by wild beasts in the wilderness, when he says, "I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning." Sheol is, as its name implies, a cavernous recess; yet it is no mere surface-grave or tomb, but an under-world of awful depth. "It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know?" "Though they dig into Sheol, thence shall my hand take them; and though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down." Thither Jew and Gentile shall go down: "What man is he that shall live and not see death, that shall deliver his soul from the power of Sheol?" Asshur and all her company, Elam and all her multitude, the mighty fallen of the uncircumcised, lie there. The great king of Babylon must go down: —

"Sheol from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming:
It stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth;
It hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.
All they shall answer and say unto thee,
Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?"[1]

But why should this abode of departed spirits be an "underworld," and why should it possess this dismal character, so different from that of the Indic Paralôka? Various answers might doubtless be suggested to these questions; but where all is conjecture, it seems reasonable to adopt the view which harmonizes with the conclusions drawn from so many similar cases. According to the tradition of the Hebrews, their forefathers were Chaldæans, of the earliest race known by that name. They dwelt in Ur, or Hur, the chief city of their people, in "lower Mesopotamia," on the Euphrates, near the junction of that river with the Tigris, and not far from

[1] *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii. p. 82. I have replaced the quoted texts from the renderings of the Revised Version, which had not appeared when Dr. Tylor's work was published.

the point where the united stream issues into the Persian Gulf. Their country, as it is graphically described by Rawlinson, must have been a dreary and most uninviting abode. "Nothing is more remarkable even now," he writes, "than the *featureless* character of the region, although in the course of ages it has received from man some interruptions in the original uniformity. On all sides a dead level extends itself, broken only by single solitary mounds, the remains of ancient temples or cities; by long lines of slightly elevated embankments, marking the course of canals, ancient or recent; and towards the north by a few sand-hills."[1]

Moreover, this dismal region was, above all others, above even Egypt itself, a land of tombs. "Next to their edifices," continues our authority, "the most remarkable of the remains which the Chaldæans have left to after-ages are their burial-places. While ancient tombs are of very rare occurrence in Assyria and Upper Babylonia, Chaldæa Proper abounds with them. It has been conjectured, with some show of reason, that the Assyrians, in the time of their power, may have made the sacred land of Chaldæa the general depository of their dead, much in the same way as the Persians even now use Kerbela and Medjef or Meshed Ali as special cemetery cities, to which thousands of corpses are brought annually. At any rate, the quantity of human relics accumulated upon certain Chaldæan sites is enormous, and seems to be quite beyond what the mere population of the surrounding district could furnish. At Warka, for instance, excepting the triangular space between the three principal ruins, the whole remainder of the platform, the whole space within the walls, and an unknown extent of desert beyond them, are everywhere filled with human bones and sepulchres. In places, coffins are piled upon coffins, certainly to the depth of thirty, probably to the depth of sixty feet; and for miles on every side of the ruins the traveller walks upon a soil teeming with the relics of ancient and now probably extinct races.[2]

If the opinion of our historian, which is based on many probable grounds, is to be accepted, the departure of the Hebrew forefathers from this ancient home took place under depressing circumstances. A new and alien race, the Cushites, had occupied the land, and subjected the Semitic possessors.[3] Various emigrations followed, "which took a northerly direction." The Assyrians withdrew to northern Mesopotamia. The Phœnicians journeyed to the far northwest, and

[1] *The Seven Great Monarchies*, vol. i. p. 4 (Am. edition).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[3] Other authorities hold that the invaders and conquerors were Elamites from Shushan, led by Khudur-Nankhundi, the father of Khudur-lagamar, styled in Genesis Chedorlaomer. See Ragozin's *Chaldæa*, p. 219.

established themselves on the northern coast of Canaan. "The family of Abraham, and probably other Aramæan families," continues the author, "ascended the Euphrates, withdrawing from a yoke which was oppressive, or at any rate unpleasant." The journey from Ur to Padan-Aram, on the head-waters of the great river, was a long and wearisome upward travel of nearly five hundred miles. From this halting-place, at a later day, a party of emigrants, led by Abraham, removed to the land of Canaan. But here, as we know, they did not for many generations deem themselves at home. After death, when, as the survivors held, the spirits of the departed were "gathered to their fathers," these spirits would, according to the grossly concrete notions of the time, have to retrace the route of the emigration back to the old Chaldæan home, to find their repose with the shades of their ancestors. This journey would be pictured in the fancies of the survivors as a long downward progress, terminating in a doleful region of tombs and desolation. A few generations, in the natural development of such mythical conceptions, would suffice to convert this downward journey into a veritable *descensus averni*, a "going down into the pit." Just as the bright, heavenly Paralôka of the Vedic bards was a vague and illusive memory of the cheerful Bactrian uplands, so the dreary and boundless Chaldæan hollows, with their vast funereal piles, where the chiefs of the ancient nations slept, "each in his own house," and "amid his own multitude," "with their graves round about him," became, in the gloomy retrospective visions of the Hebrew seers, transformed into the awful and illimitable depths of Sheol.[1]

It will be understood that these latter instances are presented only as probable deductions, and not as assured conclusions. It is always proper to be on our guard lest by pressing our speculations too far in such inquiries, we may lose the sure ground that has been actually gained. In the case of the Polynesian mythologies, where the ancestral home becomes at a later day, under its original name, the subterranean spirit-world, there can be no shadow of doubt that the explanation now proposed is correct. It has passed beyond theory, and has become unquestionable truth. Similar explanations of most of the cases cited from the traditions of our Indian tribes will probably find general acceptance. These examples will be at least sufficient to warrant a careful revision and retracing of older theories on the lines now suggested; and they will certainly serve to show that, in examining early traditions and creeds, there is always a probability of finding authentic history and important facts hidden under corruptions of language.

Horatio Hale.

[1] Isaiah xiv. 18; Ezekiel xxxii. 21, etc.